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Adoption of the report of the Committee on its forty-eighth session

Draft report

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Addendum

Proposed strategic framework for the period 2010-2011
(Item 3 (b))

Programme 18
Economic and social development in Western Asia

1. At its 16th meeting, on 20 June 2008, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered programme 18, Economic and social development in Western Asia, of the proposed biennial programme plan (A/63/6 (Prog. 18)).

2. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the programme and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the programme.

Discussion

3. Support was expressed for the programme and appreciation was expressed for the important role that the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) played in the region by assisting member countries in facing development challenges and formulating durable economic solutions under the prevailing political instability in the region.

4. A query was raised as to the legislative mandate of the programme to deal with issues relating to good governance. In addition, clarification was sought with regard to the specific meaning of "Promoting integrated social policies".

5. With regard to subprogramme 1, it was observed that the narrative needed to be more articulate in dealing with fragile ecosystems and the challenges facing the

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region owing to water scarcity and conflicts. Furthermore, concern was expressed that there was no reference to the situation and development activities in the occupied territories. The view was expressed that consideration should be given to including the challenges relating to desertification, drought and pollution in the activities of the subprogramme.

6. The view was also expressed that consideration should be given to highlighting a gender perspective in conflict situations.

7. The importance of subprogramme 7, Conflict mitigation and development, was stressed, in particular the issue of occupation, which was an obstacle to development.

Conclusions and recommendations

8. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 18, Economic and social development in Western Asia, of the proposed biennial programme plan, subject to the following modifications:**

Overall orientation

Paragraph 18.4

The first three sentences should be deleted and replaced with the following:

"The region has made varied progress in social development, especially in the education and health sectors. Some countries have developed mechanisms to invest surplus capital savings resulting from high energy prices, which have contributed to the acceleration of economic growth and social development. Political instability, foreign occupation and lack of adequate reform continue to influence economic performance in the countries of the region."

Paragraph 18.5

The last sentence should read:

"The Arab Ministerial Declaration stated that, while emphasizing that developed countries should fulfil their commitment to supporting developing countries, including Arab countries, in meeting climate change challenges, the Declaration affirmed the commitment of the Ministers, inter alia, to include policies to deal with climate change issues in all sectors within national and regional policies for sustainable development in a manner that harmonized with sustained economic growth and efforts to eradicate poverty, and to adopt national and regional action plans dealing with climate change."

Paragraph 18.7

After the first sentence, insert the following as the second sentence:

"Monitoring of the effects of foreign occupation on economic and social development in the region is becoming increasingly important."

Subprogramme 1
Integrated management of natural resources for sustainable development

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat

In expected accomplishment (b), before the words "environmentally sound technology", insert the words "appropriate and affordable".

Indicators of achievement

In indicator of achievement (b) (i), before the word "institutions", insert the words "new and/or existing".

In indicator of achievement (b) (ii), before the words "environmentally sound technology", insert the words "appropriate and affordable".

Strategy

Paragraph 18.12

In the fourth sentence, after the words "in the water", insert the word ", energy".

Paragraph 18.14

At the end of subparagraph (a), add the words ", especially disadvantaged groups".

Paragraph 18.15

Before the words "environmentally sound technologies", insert the words "appropriate and affordable".

Paragraph 18.16

After the words "the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Regional Office for West Asia", insert the words "the secretariat of the Convention to Combat Desertification, the secretariat of the Framework Convention on Climate Change," and before the words "secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity" delete the words "United Nations".

Subprogramme 2
Integrated social policies

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat

In expected accomplishment (b), before the words "the youth bulge, migration and good urban governance", insert the words "demographic changes with particular emphasis on".

In expected accomplishment (c), after the words "Enhanced participation of civil society", insert the words "in social policy dialogue and".

Indicators of achievement

In indicator of achievement (b) (ii), before the words "the youth bulge and migration", insert the words "demographic changes, with particular emphasis on".

Strategy

Paragraph 18.19

At the end of the last sentence, add the following:

", while recognizing the role of social safety nets in maintaining social and political stability."

Paragraph 18.20

At the end of the first sentence, add the words: ", including the finding of mechanisms to finance social development."

Subprogramme 3
Economic development and integration

Indicators of achievement

In indicator of achievement (a) (i), replace the word "number" with the word "percentage".

In indicator of achievement (d) (ii), replace the phrase "based on ESCWA recommendations" with the phrase "with ESCWA assistance upon the request of member countries".

Strategy

Paragraph 18.23

At the end of subparagraph (a), add the words ", including, but not limited to, diversification of production and knowledge-based economies".

Paragraph 18.25

In the first sentence, replace the words "road, rail, maritime and multimodal transport agreements" with the words "road, rail and maritime agreements".

After the first sentence, insert the following as the second sentence:

"The subprogramme will work closely with the League of Arab States for the development and implementation of a regional multimodal transport agreement for the Arab region in anticipation of the finalization of the draft convention on contracts for the international carriage of goods wholly or partly by sea (United Nations Commission on International Trade Law draft convention)."

Paragraph 18.26

In the first sentence, replace the words "through South-South cooperation" with the words "in line with regional economic agreements such as the Greater Arab Free Trade Area (GAFTA), with special emphasis on South-South cooperation".

Paragraph 18.27

In the last sentence, after the words "governmental and non-governmental bodies", insert the words ", including GCC and the League of Arab States,".

Subprogramme 4
Information and communications technology for regional integration

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat

In expected accomplishment (a), replace the word "sector" with the words "production and service sectors".

At the end of expected accomplishment (a), add the phrase ", with special focus on the provision of e-services in Arabic".

Indicators of achievement

In indicator of achievement (a) (i), replace the word "sector" with the words "production and service sectors".

Strategy

Paragraph 18.28

Replace the last sentence with the following:

"With continued monitoring of activities pertaining to the World Summit on the Information Society Geneva Plan of Action and Tunis Agenda for the Information Society and the efforts made to implement the ESCWA Regional Plan of Action for Building the Information Society, in harmonization with the Arab ICT Strategy of the League of Arab States, the subprogramme will strive to adapt the Summit outcomes to better serve the region and fine-tune plans of action in order to build an inclusive, people-centred information society that is based on productive national ICT sectors."

Paragraph 18.30

In the first sentence, after the words "national capacity", insert the words ", with special focus on human resources development,".

Paragraph 18.32

At the end of the first sentence, replace the phrase "fund-raising efforts aimed at harnessing ICT for socio-economic development" with the phrase, "efforts aimed at harnessing science and technology, particularly ICT, for socio-economic development".

Subprogramme 5
Statistics for evidence-based policymaking

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat

In expected accomplishment (a), replace the words "where statistics are not fully developed" with the words "that are less statistically developed".

In expected accomplishment (b), before the words "gender-disaggregated data", insert the words "Millennium Development Goal indicators and".

Indicators of achievement

In indicator of achievement (a) (i), replace the words "where statistics are not fully developed" with the words "that are less statistically developed".

In indicator of achievement (b) (ii), after the words "national statistical offices", add the words "with ESCWA assistance".

Add the following new indicator of achievement:

"(b) (iii) Increased percentage of statistical experts who applied the knowledge and skills gained through ESCWA training at the national level".

Strategy

Paragraph 18.33

At the end of the last sentence, replace the words "the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements" with the words "the Istanbul Declaration on measuring the progress of societies".

Paragraph 18.34

In item (b), the words "produce and disseminate" should read "produce, analyse and disseminate".

Paragraph 18.35

In the second sentence of subparagraph (c), replace the words "where statistics are not fully developed" with the words "that are less statistically developed".

Paragraph 18.36

Replace the first sentence with the following:

"In the second area, the subprogramme will continue upgrading the knowledge and skills of the national statistical offices in increasing the availability, frequency and timeliness of core socio-economic statistics, and in adopting new and revised economic and social international classifications and standards. The subprogramme will contribute to the production of accurate, relevant and timely trade in goods and services statistics and sectoral statistics, and the implementation of the System of National Accounts, 1993 and its revision, with a special focus on the informal sector and the system of quarterly national accounts."

At the end of the last sentence, insert the phrase, "and the identification of regional approaches to measure societal progress that complement the traditional Millennium Development Goal monitoring framework".

Subprogramme 6
Advancement of women

Indicators of achievement

Replace indicator (b) (i) with the following: "Increased number of voluntary measures taken by member countries, with ESCWA assistance provided in response to their request, to review and adjust laws in conformity with the Convention".

In indicator of achievement (b) (ii), after the words "local media interventions", insert the words ", with ESCWA assistance,".

Strategy

Paragraph 18.39

In the third sentence, after the word "has" and before the word "deteriorated", delete the word "further". After the word "deteriorated", insert the words ", in some countries of the region,".

Paragraph 18.41

Replace the last sentence with the following: "In response to the expressed needs of member countries, the subprogramme will aim to enhance the capacity of those stakeholders to address critical issues and take concrete measures in that regard."

Paragraph 18.42

In the last sentence, after the words "Arab Women Organization" delete the words "of Jordan".

Subprogramme 7
Conflict mitigation and development

Strategy

Paragraph 18.43

Delete the paragraph and replace with the following:

"The responsibility for implementing the subprogramme lies with the Section for Emerging and Conflict-Related Issues. Ongoing conflicts or political tensions in Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine and Yemen involving the competing interests of regional and international dynamics have profoundly affected stability as well as reversed development in a number of member countries. Those challenges are coupled with the slow development of democratic public institutions and application of human rights and civic standards. That situation continues to create a host of social, economic and political challenges, including growing inter- and intra-community tensions, the continuous influx of displaced persons and the rise of non-State actors in a number of member countries. The combination of those factors is likely to negatively affect the future of the region's youth and to pose serious impediments to civic and public actors in addressing challenges in the spheres of good governance and the environment, including the dangers posed by the scarcity of water and global warming".

Paragraph 18.44

In item (b), replace the words "civic values" with the words "values of citizenship".

Paragraph 18.45

In the second sentence, after the words "unleashed by conflict", insert the word ", occupation".

In the penultimate sentence, replace the words "conflict areas" with the words "conflict and occupation".

Paragraph 18.46

The first sentence should read:

"In the second area, the subprogramme will explore the application of principles of good governance, based on the internationally agreed upon human rights principles, including values of citizenship, while taking due consideration of the region's historical and cultural specificities."

In the second sentence, replace the words "civic values" with the words "values of citizenship".